

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested. Claims 1-19 are currently pending and stand rejected. Applicant has amended claims 15, 16, 17. Claims 12 and 13 are cancelled. No new matter has been added.

Formal issues

The Office Action objected to the drawings under 37 CFR § 1.83(a). Applicant has cancelled claims 12 and 13 without prejudice. With respect to claim 9, Applicant has amended Figure 8 to show a covering element made of plastic. Withdrawal of the objection to the drawings is therefore respectfully requested.

§ 112 rejection

The Office Action rejected claims 16 and 17 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Applicant has amended the claims to correct the antecedent basis issues helpfully noted by the Examiner. Withdrawal of the rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

§ 102 rejections

Claims 1-4, 6-7, 13-14 and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as being anticipated by EP 1 314 600 to Grolle ("Grolle"). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

The earliest effective date of Grolle is May 28, 2003, which is after the August 20, 2002 priority date of this application. Applicant submits herewith a certified translation of the German priority document. Grolle is therefore not prior art against this application. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

§ 103 rejections

Claims 1-2, 4, 6, 7, 10-14, and 18-19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Grolle in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,533,349 to Nabuurs ("Nabuurs"). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection. As noted above, Grolle is not prior art against this application. Nabuurs alone does not teach or suggest the claimed invention because it does not show a roof outer skin having the claimed configuration. Thus, the Office Action fails to

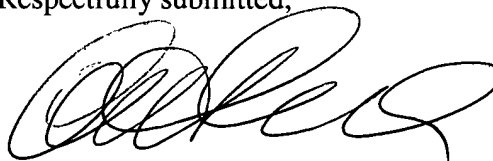
establish a prima facie case of obviousness with respect to claims 1-2, 4, 6, 7, 10-14, and 18-19. Withdrawal of the rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

Claims 8 and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Grolle in view of Nabuurs and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,752,099 to Roos ("Roos"). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection. Claims 8 and 9 depend on patentable claim 1 and are therefore also patentable for the reasons explained above. Withdrawal of the rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating that claims 3, 5 and 15-17 contain allowable subject matter. Because Grolle is not prior art against this application, however, the claims are allowable without being rewritten.

All objections and rejections having been addressed, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance, and a Notice to that effect is earnestly solicited. Applicant believes that no additional fees are necessary, however, the Commissioner is authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 50-1482 in the name of Carlson, Gaskey & Olds for any additional fees or credit the account for any overpayment.

Respectfully submitted,



Anna M. Shih, Reg. No. 36,372
Carlson, Gaskey & Olds
400 W. Maple Road, Ste. 350
Birmingham, MI 48009
(248) 988-8360

Dated: August 31, 2004

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as First Class Mail, postage prepaid, in an envelope addressed to Commissioner of Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on this 31st day of August, 2004.



Beth A. Beard